

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 1 through 20 are pending in the application and the Examiner maintained the rejection of all claims.

By this Amendment, the substance of claims 3 and 13 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 11, respectively.

Claim Rejections, 35 U.S.C. §102

In item 4 on pages 2-4 of the Office Action, the Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,275,223 to Hughes ("Hughes").

The Present Invention

The present invention provides a method and system for providing user assistance in connection with use of a computer program. In a preferred embodiment, the method and system of the present invention combines an active display of the past, current, and future steps in an ongoing process with a series of associated decision panels and forms to be completed in order to carry out the steps. The invention provides user assistance for the completion of complex sequential tasks and is a means of providing user assistance in the execution of complex, multi-step tasks, wherein the steps have sequential dependencies. These could be any such tasks performed by a single user with a computer, such as the purchase of airline tickets, purchase of books, etc.

The present invention displays the task steps already performed (past), currently being performed (present), and to be performed (future) by the user in the display adjacent to the

primary client window in a selectable format. The user is able to see the steps abstractly represented in the window, like a map, and can move between steps by selecting an item in the navigator bar.

U.S. Patent No. 6,275,223 to Hughes

U.S. Patent No. 6,272,223 to Hughes ("Hughes") is a code inspection tool that interfaces with a known configuration management system to load a quantity of original source code. It discloses a multi-user tool that facilitates the process of source code inspection, and is restricted to the task of code inspection. The system of Hughes includes a side-by-side display of the original source code and modified source code. Changes to either are marked visually, via arrow icons displayed in indicator window 1513 of Figure 15 (incorrectly referred to as "indicator 1507" in column 12 of Hughes). Statistics are compiled on the code inspection process such as the lines of code inspected, the time of inspection, and the like. Further, annotation window 1508 is situated to the right of the source code window displaying the new lines of code. Within the annotation window 1508 are annotation icons, one of which is indicated by icon 1512 in Figure 15. By clicking on the icon, an annotation can be viewed as displayed in Figure 19. The annotation window allows the coders to write notes to each other indicating why changes were made, suggesting proposed code changes, etc. The annotations can be edited as displayed in Figure 18. However, it is noted that adding or editing annotations does not change the source code displayed in, for example, Figure 15, and that "selecting" of the lines of code themselves is not possible.

The Cited Prior Art Does Not Anticipate the Claimed Invention

The MPEP and case law provide the following definition of anticipation for the purposes of 35 U.S.C. §102:

“A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” MPEP §2131 citing *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Company of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987)

Applicant acknowledges that Hughes discloses side-by-side display of information by a computer system. However, as noted above, the side-by-side display in Hughes is a display of original source code and modified source code. This gives a user of the system the ability to visually compare changes that have been made between sections of source code. Hughes has no applicability outside of the ability to perform code inspection tasks, and there is no ability to select items in either of the windows to display a visual representation of selectable future steps available for navigation. The side-by-side display of Hughes simply shows code lines so that they can be compared, not so that they can be selected and navigated through.

By contrast, the present invention allows a user of a complex, multi-step task system to view abstractly the steps available and move between the steps by **selecting** an item in the navigator bar, including future steps not yet executed. Each of the steps are **selectable** through mouse or other form of manipulation, not merely displayed as the code steps of Hughes are displayed.

By being able to view and select the available steps, including those which have yet to be executed, a user of the system is able to essentially see a “map” of where a particular step will take the user. For example, in the context of making airline reservations, using the present system, a user could visually see the various paths that will be taken by the program,

depending upon certain selections that were made. Thus, if the user was given the option of selecting non-stop flights, flights involving a single stop, and flights involving two stops, the user could visually follow the path the program would take for each option, before selecting one of the options. This may help assist the user in deciding which path to follow.

The code checking functions of Hughes and the navigation functions of the present invention are non-analogous. Referring to Figure 15 of Hughes, for example, *if* a user were able to click on the tenth line in source code window 1502, which reads "#define MAXLINE 1" and would then be shown several paths where the program code might follow in a display of some kind, it is possible that an argument could be made of some analogy between the two. However, nothing in Hughes teaches or suggests the selectability of the lines of code (they merely can be viewed) nor the display of a visual representation of an interrelated series of selectable steps, including future steps.

Each of the independent claims of the present invention, as amended (and therefore, all dependent claims as well), include specific recitation of this limitation (e.g., claim 1 - "...each of said procedures comprising an interrelated series of selectable steps...said navigator bar displaying a visual representation of said interrelated series of selectable steps associated with said currently selected step, said visual representation including a display of future steps not yet performed by said computer program."). Accordingly, claims 1-20 patentably define over Hughes, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Conclusion

The present invention is not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims. An early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 09-0461.

Respectfully submitted

2/5/04
Date

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